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Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A peptide, the sequence of which consists of ~~part or all of~~ SEQ ID NO:1, ~~wherein the sequence comprises~~ SEQ ID NO:2, or SEQ ID NO:3.
2. (Previously presented) The peptide of claim 1, the sequence of which consists of SEQ ID NO:2.
3. (Previously presented) The peptide of claim 1, the sequence of which consists of SEQ ID NO:3.
4. (Withdrawn) A B cell epitope peptide comprising the amino acid sequence as denoted by SEQ ID NO:4.
5. (Previously presented) A peptide as claimed in claim 1, being a synthetic peptide.
6. (Original) A chemically modified peptide according to claim 5.
7. (Previously presented) A peptide as claimed in claim 1, capable of conferring immunity against autoimmune and/or inflammatory disorders.
8. (Withdrawn) A nucleic acid sequence encoding a B cell epitope peptide as claimed in claim 1.

9. (Withdrawn) A DNA sequence as claimed in to claim 8.
10. (Withdrawn) A DNA sequence as claimed in claim 9 comprising the nucleic acid sequence as denoted by SEQ ID NO:5.
11. (Withdrawn) A DNA construct comprising a nucleic acid sequence as claimed in claim 8.
12. (Withdrawn) A DNA construct comprising the DNA sequence as claimed in claim 9.
13. (Previously presented) A vaccine comprising as an active ingredient an effective vaccinating amount of at least one peptide as claimed in claim 1, optionally further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, diluent, additive or adjuvant.
14. (Withdrawn) A vaccine comprising as active ingredient a DNA sequence as claimed in claim 1, optionally further comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, diluent, additive or adjuvant.
15. (Original) A vaccine as claimed in claim 13, for conferring immunity against autoimmune or inflammatory disorders.
16. (Previously presented) The vaccine as claimed in claim 15, for conferring immunity against arthritis.
17. (Withdrawn) An antibody directed against a B cell epitope peptide comprising the amino acid sequence as denoted by SEQ ID NO:1.

18. (Withdrawn) An antibody directed against a B cell epitope peptide having the amino acid sequence as denoted by SEQ ID NO:2.

19. (Withdrawn) An antibody directed against a B cell epitope peptide having the amino acid sequence as denoted by SEQ ID NO:3.

20. (Withdrawn) An antibody directed against a B cell epitope peptide comprising the amino acid sequence as denoted by SEQ ID NO:4.

21. (Withdrawn) A composition for the passive immunization against an autoimmune or inflammatory disorder comprising a pharmaceutically effective amount of an antibody as claimed in claim 17.

22. (Withdrawn) A composition as claimed in claim 21, for the prevention or treatment of autoimmune or inflammatory disorder.

23. (Withdrawn) A method for predicting the susceptibility/predisposition of an individual to arthritis by testing a sample of serum from said individual for the presence of antibodies directed against a peptide as claimed in claim 1, by suitable immunoassay techniques.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Previously presented) The peptide of claim 1, the sequence of which consists of SEQ ID NO:1.

26-35. (Cancelled)

36. (Withdrawn) A method for treating an autoimmune or inflammatory disorder, the method comprising:

identifying a subject suffering from an autoimmune or inflammatory disorder; and
administering to the subject an effective amount of the peptide of claim 1.

37. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 36, wherein the subject is a human.

38. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 36, wherein the subject is suffering from
rheumatoid arthritis or adjuvant arthritis.

39. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 36, wherein the peptide ~~comprises~~ consists of the
amino acid sequence of SED ID NO:2.

40. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 36, wherein the peptide ~~comprises~~ consists of the
amino acid sequence of SED ID NO:3.

41. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 36, wherein the peptide is a synthetic peptide.

42. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 41, wherein the peptide is chemically modified.

43-48. (Cancelled)

49. (Withdrawn) A method for generating antibodies, comprising:
providing the peptide of claim 1; and
administering the peptide to a subject.

50. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 49, wherein the subject is an animal.

51. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 50, wherein the subject is a rat, mouse, sheep, rabbit, or chicken.

52. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 50, wherein the method further ~~comprising~~ comprises isolating from the subject antibodies that recognize the peptide.

53. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 50, wherein the peptide ~~comprises~~ consists of the amino acid sequence of SED ID NO:2.

54. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 50, wherein the peptide ~~comprises~~ consists of the amino acid sequence of SED ID NO:3.

55. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 50, wherein the peptide is a synthetic peptide.

56. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 55, wherein the peptide is chemically modified.

57. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 49, wherein the subject is a human.

58. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 57, wherein the peptide ~~comprises~~ consists of the amino acid sequence of SED ID NO:2.

59. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 57, wherein the peptide ~~comprises~~ consists of the amino acid sequence of SED ID NO:3.

60. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 57, wherein the peptide is a synthetic peptide.

61. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 60, wherein the peptide is chemically modified.

62-72. (Cancelled)

73. (Withdrawn) A method for predicting the susceptibility or predisposition of a subject to arthritis, the method comprising:

providing the peptide of claim 1;

obtaining a serum sample from a subject; and

testing the sample to detect antibodies that recognize the peptide;

wherein absence of the antibodies indicates that the subject is susceptible or predisposed to arthritis.

74. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 73, wherein the subject is a human.

75. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 73, wherein the peptide ~~comprises~~ consists of the amino acid sequence of SED ID NO:2.

76. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 73, wherein the peptide ~~comprises~~ consists of the amino acid sequence of SED ID NO:3.

77. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 73, wherein the peptide is a synthetic peptide.

78. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 77, wherein the peptide is chemically modified.

79-83. (Cancelled)